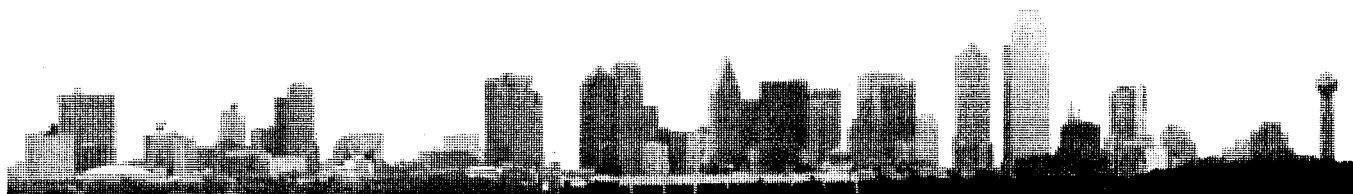


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

Volume 13 Issue 4 — April 1995

Dallas

Amiga Update

the saga continues
the latest from the nets

Dateline: 03-13-95 — author unknown

It was truly a wild week in the Commodore liquidation proceedings. Early Thursday, word came to me from a reliable source that Escom (the German-based PC clone maker who has expressed interest in the Commodore assets) and the liquidator had reached an agreement to make their bid the contract bid. That contract would then be subjected to a public auction process, at which all interested bidders would have a chance to top each other's bids, and the highest bid would win the contract for the delivery of Commodore's assets.

But a few hours later, it was revealed that this ALMOST happened, but was aborted because of a bizarre set of circumstances. Escom had instead made a deal, two weeks earlier, with Commodore Germany's liquidator to purchase the "C=" and "Commodore" trademarks for \$1.4 million, and pulled out of the C= International deal since they had what they truly wanted, the trademark.

However, the International liquidator and the US courts did not feel that Commodore Germany had the right to sell the Commodore trademark. Furthermore, one of the remaining bidders threatened to pull out of the International liquidation if the trademark was not part of the package.

The US judge threatened Escom and the C= Germany liquidator with legal action.

On Friday, Escom and the Commodore International liquidator reached a new agreement. Essentially, their contract has now been established as the contract bid. If they do not obtain the Commodore assets in the liquidation auction, they will hand the Commodore Germany trademark over to the winners.

This is the breakdown of the details, as described by Dan Stets' Philadelphia Inquirer article:

"Escom's contract bid is for 6 million dollars, not counting the 1.4 million they have already spent on

Commodore Germany's trademark. Escom's offer includes \$3.5 million for Commodore's core assets, an additional \$1 million for its German assets, \$500,000 for Dutch assets and \$1 million for the manufacturing inventory remaining in the Philippines, where Commodore used to build its computers."

The consortiums lead by both David Pleasance of C= UK and Alex Amor of Creative Equipment, International are expected to bid at the auction. Other potential bidders will be notified when a date is set, which may be as early as a month away.

At last...progress!

Dateline: March 25, 1995 — The Sam Report (Genie)

I had a nice chat with Alex Amor of CEI today. He is aware that I report for Genie so this is cleared for release.

The auction will begin April 20th in New York and will last about a week. It now appears clear clear that the remaining interested parties are pursuing separate, non-conflicting, parts of the overall package (Commodore name, set-top technology, Amiga manufacture, etc.). It seems there is a pre-auction agreement (or at least an understanding) among the parties that whoever wins will gladly provide the others with the pieces they want. Only CEI plans to manufacture Amigas.

Once again, Alex mentioned the caveat that "somebody could come out of the woodwork and surprise us all but he seemed less concerned about this than previously. He mentioned having an excellent information network that keeps an eye out for entities that might be lurking in the shadows ready to make a last-minute grab. Those sources indicate no lurkers at present.

The Gould/Ali matter is not a complication at all in

the sale process. The creditors will go after them in a totally separate action that in no way affects the sale at auction.

He had no comment on the report that IBM was lined up as the contract manufacturer (said he couldn't discuss that). He referred to contracts for components that are valid and would be rescinded only if CEI doesn't prevail.

He confirmed my earlier report that talks have been held with Tandy and could develop into a distribution reality.

Again, initial production calls for A4000Ts and A1200s. The latter will be getting a larger case for more internal expansion, but that might not happen immediately.

Alex, in shorts and sneakers, went back to attending to store customers on a busy Saturday morning. As always, he appeared full of optimism. "By the 27th it will all be over!"

This has been the Sam Report from Miami for GENie. — S.Ormes GENIE.GEIS.COM ✓

The Commodore Curse

by Mike Sessums

A recent account of Commodore's woes was intercepted in a posting to the NAUTARCH Internet newsgroup:

"COMMODORE was sold in 1941 to a San Francisco speculator and loaded with lumber at Port Angeles for a voyage to South Africa. She ended her days there, in a tangle of financial woes, and was sold for debts."

A Commodore loaded with 16 megs of RAM, maybe, but with lumber? Well, this entry cited by Robert Schwemmer in the nautical archaeology newsgroup, NAUTARCH, from the "America Bureau of Shipping 1946" may not give exact details of Commodore Computer's problems, but one can see some similarities.

"The four-masted schooner COMMODORE, having passed to San Francisco owners, was fitted with three new masts and in December began loading lumber at Rayonier Mill, Port Angeles, departing December 20 in charge of Capt. Charles J. Tulee. After stopping at Pitcairn, as KAIULANI had done a few months earlier, she arrived at Durban in May, 1942, 143 days out. Capt. Tulee was suffering from brain tumor upon his arrival and died shortly afterward in a Durban hospital. The vessel was sold to South African owners and after making a voyage in tow to South America was knocked apart for lumber to build houses, the remains being burned on a beach near Cape Town."

Oooh, eerie, hunh? Did that witch Sea Haggy put a curse on the good name of Commodore, or what? Hey, we love the computers, but perhaps whoever continues on the fine tradition of these great computers will take a lesson from history here and name the new company anything but Commodore! ✓

CanDo

a look at v3.0

usenet review by Ben Scott

CanDo is a "visual" application development environment, which allows largely mouse-based creation of Amiga software.

AUTHOR/COMPANY INFORMATION

Name: INOVAtronics
Address: 8499 Greenville Av. Suite 209B
Dallas, TX 75231

LIST PRICE

I think the list price is \$399 (US), but I only paid a \$159 upgrade fee as a registered owner of CanDo v1.5.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

2 MB RAM required.
Hard drive required.
AmigaDOS 2.04 or higher required.

COPY PROTECTION

None.

MACHINE USED FOR TESTING

Amiga 4000/040 with 18 megs of RAM, AmigaDOS 3.0

INSTALLATION

Uses the standard Commodore installer — straightforward and simple.

REVIEW

I won't attempt to describe the program in detail; this is, after all, a short review. CanDo has a very polished interface consisting of scrolling toolbars (horizontal or vertical, depending on your situation) and many types of option-filled windows. You can begin by setting the screenmode and/or window size for your application, then begin adding buttons, menus, timers, graphic elements, ARexx or input event handlers, or whatever else you need for your program, then link them to each other or to script files. CanDo's scripting language seems very complete and clear — some 440 commands with plain-English names (no matter how long that makes them, hence functions like "SetWindow-BrushAnimTPS()...") and a straightforward, forgiving syntax. It also possesses a full set of looping constructs, global and local variables (along with type conversion and both Array and Record types), parameter passing, and surprising speed of execution. It is a rare moment indeed when I come across a situation for which there is no convenient command to handle it. Once, I had to create sets of mutual-exclusion buttons, early on in the learning process, and it took me just 3-4 minutes to set up a quick function to handle the job, despite my inexperience.

CanDo also has an outstanding help system and some very nice programming aids. Not only is all information available as an AmigaGuide hypertext file, but simply double-clicking on a command or keyword in the script editor will bring up the relevant page for definitions and explanations. You can also search for commands with the Lexicon Assistant and have it insert them into your code complete with the proper template. But that's only for situations when you actually need to

Code executes surprisingly fast, at least on my 68040 — I have an appalling brute-force search routine cobbled together in one project, and you can hardly tell it's not a highly optimized algorithm by watching it run.

write code — very often, you hand need never leave the mouse if you utilize the toolbar. For example, the "Objects" button brings up a requester which shows every object in your project in one window, and every possible action that can be applied to it in the other. You can disable it, execute one of its scripts, move it, find out its status, and so on, all with mouse clicks that write the code for you. You can also paint graphics (including animbrushes) on the screen, play sounds or MODs, run external commands via DOS or ARexx, and call other routines. CanDo is fairly object-oriented — when displaying or moving an Animbrush buffer, for example, it can have scripts assigned to specific frames (or each frame) that are controlled by accessing the buffer itself, not the calling routine. Keyboard shortcuts for functions are easy to create as well, since you can have them simply call the appropriate script attached to the object in question (button or menu item or whatever). There are facilities for aligning GUI objects on your interface,

Another nice aspect of CanDo is its relative efficiency in most areas. Code executes surprisingly fast, at least on my 68040 — I have an appalling brute-force search routine cobbled together in one project, and you can hardly tell it's not a highly optimized algorithm by watching it run. CanDo programs are also quite small — at least until you "bind" them. In order to run on an Amiga without the hefty cando.library installed, you must process them to integrate the library functions into the executable. This can turn a 5K utility into a 180K monster. But these days, an extra one or two hundred K doesn't seem to bother people like it did in the past. INOVAtronics has revised its licensing policy to allow freely distributable executables for non-commercial purposes (and commercial products for under \$50).

Other functions include serial and parallel port handlers, the ability to create ARexx ports and parse incoming commands, the ability to handle mouse or joystick events of any type including doubleclick, drag, RMB up and down, and proportional game controllers, the ability to use brushes for menu items or even button masks for irregular shaped hit areas, a full set of Workbench icon manipulation functions including AppEvent support, about 50 special effect transitions (complete with animated preview), asynchronous timer event objects which enable limited "multithreading", a fairly robust user-definable error handling facility, and even the interesting ability to execute code typed in by the user at runtime, plus lots more of course. There is a separate CanDebug package available as well, to allow single-stepping and a supervised runtime overview among other things. I have not tried this yet, however.

DOCUMENTATION

There is an excellent 650 page illustrated manual in a 3-ring binder, and all text is available as an AmigaGuide document online as well. It includes the standard prose explanations of all functions as well as a large reference section, and a full index.

LIKES

Almost everything. The help system, as I've said, is wonderful. The flexibility and ease of use is fantastic. The manual is nicely written and printed, the software is stable and robust — it's a joy to use, and surpasses many well-known Windows and Mac visual development packages in some areas.

DISLIKES AND SUGGESTIONS

There are a few features I think they could add to the scripting language, like making it easier to control the opening of screens (as in changing the parameters at runtime, rather than fixing them in stone when the program is written). I have a small list of minor interface improvements, too, like simpler cut-and-paste for multiple objects, a global search-and-replace function for all scripts in a project, more extensive Undo features and so forth. Nothing really fundamental or major, however.

COMPARISON TO OTHER SIMILAR PRODUCTS

Right now I'm using CanDo to re-implement a project I originally did with SuperBase4 Pro. I wouldn't exactly call it a "similar" product, though. After less than 3 weeks with CanDo, including learning time, I was at the same point that I was after 4 months with SBase, and the application is vastly better in the bargain. The online help and programming aids are unrivaled.

BUGS

No crashes yet; once in a while I can click on a button and nothing will happen, but that doesn't usually persist. Also, certain errors you can make in your program can bypass the error handler and cause CanDo to

➤ Page 5

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks
from Bill Raecke

Deluxe Galaga by Edgar M. Vigdal

I know, I've featured *Deluxe Galaga* more often than any other program in my monthly column. Can't help it! It's still one of the best games you'll find for your Amiga. This new version, 2.5, contains several changes. Game play has changed somewhat, with more difficult meteor storms and less frequent warp malfunctions...but it now also contains shields that can be collected or purchased to help protect you from hits. You can now take a hit without losing a life — an important addition. This latest version is on MCCC-A_834. Enjoy!

term by Olaf Barthel

Another program that has been featured here repeatedly is *term*. That is because, as I have stated before, *term* is simply the most powerful terminal package I have seen for the Amiga. It will do it all — and it looks good while doing it. As with many of the more recent upgrades, this one (version 4.3) is not major — it has modified requesters and some bug fixes — but it never hurts to stay current. Because of its size, *term* is distributed in archived format and spans several disks this month. On MCCC-A_835 are the 68030 and above version of the program along with the "extras." On disk 836 are the docs in TeX and Postscript formats, the libraries, and the locale files. And on disk MCCC-A_837 are the standard docs and the standard version of the program.

Virus Checker by John Veldthuis

One more repeat. This is version 6.52 of *Virus Checker*. *Virus Checker* is my personal favorite virus utility — and you really should keep current on this one. Always check any program or disk you bring into your system...this includes those you purchase. Better safe than sorry. Look on MCCC-A_840.

Charr by Michael W. Boeh

Finally, on to something brand new. Actually, this isn't all new I guess. *Charr* is a program very much like *Scorched Tanks*. It's an "Artillery" game which has opponents firing projectiles at each other in the hopes of destroying the others before you are destroyed yourself. You control the angle and power of the shot. In addition, you get to choose your defense,

your weapon, and the method of detonation. That method of detonation is what sets *Charr* apart from *Scorched Tanks*. That and the ability to fire multiple, different weapons at the same time. For example, you might hit your opponent with a nuclear blast then some lava in the same turn. Like *Scorched Tanks*, *Charr* lets you play against other human and/or computer players. It's a lot of fun. Don't take my word for it — try it. It's on MCCC-A_840.

Directory Opus ARexx Scripts

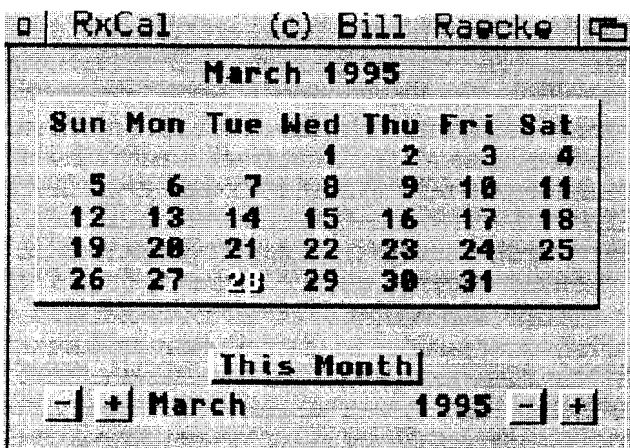
For all you *Directory Opus* users out there, here are a few very nice additions. All three are on MCCC-A_841. First is LhA.dopus. This script was originally written by Michiel Pelt. It provided the ability to list the contents of an LhA archive in one of *Directory Opus*' directory windows and then add to or selectively extract files from the archive. This version has been modified by me, Bill Raecke, to provide support for the superior LZX as well as the original LhA. The program automatically detects which archive type it is working with and acts accordingly. While I was at it, I also corrected several bugs in the original, including the fact that file names are no longer truncated in the display window, and the program no longer locks up when accidentally activated with no file selected.

The second one is called LZX_Add.dopus and is also by me, Bill Raecke. Activating this program to create or add to LZX archives will result in smaller archives than using LZX directly with *Directory Opus*.

The third program is called PhoneList.dopus and was written by Harold Williams. This one displays a phone list in one of *Directory Opus*' directory windows. It uses a simple text file that you create with any text editor. The reason for the program is simple — *Directory Opus* is probably always running in your system (if not, why not?) and this way a phone number list is just a button press away.

ARexx Libraries

Here are a bunch of ARexx libraries for all you ARexx programmers/users out there. APIG.library (version 3.1) by Ronnie E. Kelly provides access to virtually ALL of the Amiga's graphic and Intuition functions. APIG, by the way, stands for "ARexx



Programmers Intuition & Graphics" library." It's on MCCC-A_843. On that same disk is the REXxDOSSupport.library (version 1.4) by Hartmut Goebel. It adds several DOS extensions missing from the standard REXXSupport.library.

The rest of these you'll find on MCCC-A_844. REXXArpLib.library is the first, and STILL foremost, AREXX extension library. It was written by W.G.J. Langeveld. This is the latest version (3.3). REXXArpLib provides access to standard requesters and many Intuition functions. REXXExtend.library (version 1.0) by Greg Cunningham provides some very nice additions such as AppMenus and AppIcons and AmigaDOS pattern matching and even variable passing between AREXX programs. REXXReqTools.library (version 1.3) by Rafael D'Halleweyn provides access to file requesters and just about any other requester you can think of through the ReqTools.library.

REXX-Calendars by Bill Raecke

While we're on the subject of AREXX libraries, we might as well find a use for some of them. I wrote two AREXX, Intuition-based calendar programs using the REXXArpLib.library. They are both the same other than the size of the display. Each provides buttons for moving backward and forward through months and years and another button to get you back to the present. Nothing fancy, but if you tie one of these to a hot key with a tool like *Tool Manager* you can have a calendar at the touch of the keyboard. Both are on MCCC-A_844.

BlitzBlank by Thomas Borkel

BlitzBlank is another modular screen blanker. We've had those before, but this moves into the forefront as the best I've seen. Features? It's AGA/OS 3.x compatible, compatible with most graphics cards, has an AREXX interface, has a Preferences program, and it switches to a plain blank screen if the CPU is busy. It also has a "blank" and "never-blank" corner feature, operates as a commodity and provides context sensitive help in its Preference program. And the modules are neat! "Amiga Sign" is a rotating 3-D Amiga checkmark that bounces around on the screen. "Butterfly" is a variable number of butterflies flying across the screen in beautiful color (use a low-res, interlaced screen for this one). "Clock" is the nicest analog clock blanker I've seen. It zooms out from a single point to its full size and then moves randomly around the screen. (Slow it down to make it look its best.) "Fountain" is kind of like a fireworks fountain with sparks originating at a point at the bottom of the screen, shooting up, and then coming back down from the top of their arc. "Snow" looks just like a snowstorm — with variable winds blowing the flakes this way and that. The snow accumulates at the bottom of the screen. Each of the modules (there are 29 in all) has its own settings requester so you can get it just the way you want it for your system. And the random feature selects from only the modules YOU select. You definitely want to add this to your system. You'll find it this month on MCCC-A_845. It is distributed in archive format because of space limitations. ✓



CanDo continued from page 3

just quit (cleanly, so far as I can tell) without explanation, or sometimes even appear to hang. The latter usually happens only when I try to address an AREXX port improperly, for example. Included are utilities to stop a deck which has hung or is stuck in a loop. I rate it as very stable.

VENDOR SUPPORT

I wish they had some kind of Net presence. There is a CanDo mailing list but so far it has shown almost no activity. My only contact with tech support came before I ordered the product, to verify that all the functions I need were present, and they seemed informed and helpful at the time. Note that there are rumors INOVAtronics is in financial trouble, but they seem to be hanging in there at the time of this writing. *[Editor's note: INOVAtronics is gone now, but CanDo is as good as ever.]*

CONCLUSIONS

This is one of the slickest programs I've ever used on the Amiga. It's actually one of the slickest programs I've used on any platform, when you come right down to it. Anyone who needs to write software on the Amiga and has not already invested lots of time and effort into a more conventional programming language, or does not have the time to use something like C, should take a good look at CanDo. It's useful for everything from multimedia presentations to games, database applications to paint programs. It's also ideal for application prototyping or building front-ends to other software packages. ✓

SyQuest SQ3270S

a solution to the never-ending quest for more disk storage
usenet review by Randy Kruszka

The SyQuest SQ3270S — ROM 1.21 (in A4000), and 1.19 (in A3000).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A 270MB (255MB formatted) 3.5" Cartridge [cart] Disk Drive [CDD]. It fits into a standard 3.5" LP (1" high) drive bay.

AUTHOR/COMPANY INFORMATION

Name: SyQuest Technology
Address: 47071 Bayside Parkway
Fremont, CA 94538-6517
Telephone: (800) 245-CART or (510)226-4000 in USA,
32-11-673140 in Europe
65-294-8484 in Asia.
FAX: (510)226-4102 in USA
32-11-683525 in Europe
65-294-7277 in Asia

LIST PRICE

I'm not sure what the list price is, but I paid \$430 (US) in July 1994. They have dropped to \$395 (US) as of February 1995. At this time, cartridges are as low as \$60 (US).

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

Any auto-mounting SCSI Host Bus Interface [SHBI] should be able to use this drive, but check with the manufacturer if you are uncertain.

You need enough RAM to mount each partition, but that is it for memory requirements. I can't see anyone running into problems unless you have several partitions and a small amount of RAM available.

No minimum CPU is required, although I assume a 68000 will reduce transfer speeds.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

SHBIs that do not auto-mount will need some type of mounting software such as SCSIMounter, which is available on aminet and mirror sites.

There is no minimum AmigaDOS version that I am aware of. With Workbench 1.3 you will probably have to make your own mountlist. I would upgrade!

It works great with both Amigas listed below under "MACHINES USED FOR TESTING."

COPY PROTECTION

Not applicable.

MACHINES USED FOR TESTING

Amiga 4000/040-25MHz, 2MB of Chip RAM and 8MB of Fast RAM.

1 internal 1.76MB floppy drive.

Original (Commodore-issued) 124MB Seagate hard drive.

GVP's IO/Expander (2 serial and 1 parallel port).

Emplant Deluxe.

FFS-International used for all hard drives.

AmigaDOS 3.0.

Amiga 3000/030-25MHz, 2MB of Chip RAM and 8MB of Fast RAM.

1 internal 880KB floppy drive.

Original (C= Issued) 52MB Quantum hard drive and SHBI.

FFS-International used for all hard drives.

AmigaDOS 2.1

INSTALLATION

I put it in the 5.25" drive bay with a 5.25" adaptor, since my 1.76MB floppy drive from Commodore is greater than the standard 1" height. It will fit in the 3.5" drive bay if you have the smaller floppy drive. (Which I plan to get when I get a CD-ROM someday.) In that case, I would recommend putting it in the top 3.5" slot since it generates more heat than the floppy does.

The drive my A3000 friend bought was an external version, so all we had to do was plug it in the external SCSI connector, put the terminator block on, and away we went. If you don't have room to install it internally or would rather not open up your computer, this is the easiest route.

OPERATION

Loading a cartridge is pretty simple. After opening up the cartridge's case, you insert the cartridge and move the lever to the right. The disk spins up and then aligns itself. Once the LED changes from amber to green, you are ready to roll. To remove a cartridge, press the button and wait for the disk to spin back down. The load lever will pop to the left slightly and after you push it all the way left, you can remove the cartridge and put in another.

The manual cautions against leaving the cartridge in when the computer is off, but when I called SyQuest they said that most of the users do anyway. The head parks so I assume it's safe, but this is at your own risk of course!

PERFORMANCE

On my A4000, I'm using the SHBI built into the Emplant board, which is known not to be fast unless it is being accessed directly from the emulator itself. Using

DiskSpeed 4.2, I was able to get about 600KB/s reads, and 700KB/s writes.

On the A3000 (known for 4.5MB/s), we were able to get 2MB/s reads! On the Internet, I have read that 1.7MB/s reads are typical. We were not able to test writes since my friend did not have an empty cartridge at the time. Most of the time you are reading data anyway, so this is not as important. (Or so I say!) I will be able to provide more data once we get more cartridges and a faster interface for my A4000.

DURABILITY

I have not tested them, but as long as you keep the cartridges in their holder, they are pretty safe. They can be mailed this way without any extra padding.

SIZE

The cartridge itself is (approximately) 3.75" wide X 3/16" high X 3.75" long. For most of the world ;), that is 9.5 cm wide X 1 cm high X 9.5 cm long. Practically speaking, it is about as big as a 3.5" floppy and as high as three floppies stacked on top of each other. I wonder why they call them 3.5" cartridges since they really aren't! Capacity wise, it is read/write (but not format) compatible with the 105MB cartridges as well.

NOISE

It is very quiet compared to my Seagate hard drive, and I don't notice the extra noise it makes until the head moves around. The SyQuest also spins up almost 25% faster than my Seagate hard drive.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation provided will depend on which drive you get. The external version had a different instruction manual, while my internal version documentation came right from SyQuest.

The documentation is well written. It has pictures which help you configure the right SCSI unit number, and it shows where the termination resistors are. There is a help section on formatting for an IBM, but of course you won't need that!

I think that beginners could install this drive if they felt comfortable opening up their computer. In the A4000, you have to remove the front panel to pull out the drive bays, which is the hardest part.

LIKES

Oh yes! Besides being nice and small, your expandability is limited only by the number of cartridges you buy. You can take up to 255MB by a friend's house with only one cartridge, or mail quite a bit at once. It is faster than optical media and the physically larger & more expensive 5.25" models.

DISLIKES AND SUGGESTIONS

The only thing I thought would be nice to improve on is the LED. When the disk is idling, the green light stays on. When you read/write, it changes to amber.

Maybe I'm just used to the regular hard drive light which stays off until you use it. The manual is missing the sentence "Call for a RMA# [Return Materials Authorization Number] before returning anything to us." These are minor problems I'd say.

COMPARISON TO OTHER SIMILAR PRODUCTS

SyQuest makes a 5.25" version which is reported to be more of a standard. If you have a user-group that uses the 5.25" CDD and the 44 & 88MB cartridges, you may want to go this route. If you are just starting up for yourself or with a friend and don't intend on trading with the majority of MAC and IBM systems, I'd go with this drive. IoMega makes a 5.25" CDD as well, but again it is bigger physically. I'm not sure about transfer speed, as their newest 230 MB version is faster than previous models.

BUGS

There aren't any bugs that I know of.

VENDOR SUPPORT

I did get one cartridge which formatted very slowly about 1/2 way through the process. I tried a low level format on it, and after a 1/2 hour I gave up. I returned the cartridge to SyQuest, and 2 weeks later I called to find out that I needed an RMA#. A week later I called and found out that the guy who helped me was let go (!) because he was doing a poor job. As soon as they discovered my delay, I received a new cartridge the next day. I would expect their normal service to be prompt. Be sure to get an RMA# first!

WARRANTY

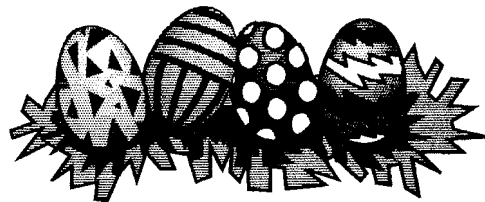
I found out later that their standard warranty lasts 2 years on the drive and 5 years on the cartridge itself, but that it may vary with the vendor — and all returns should be done through them. This obviously reduces SyQuest's shipping costs, as they don't have to mail the fixes out separately.

The warranty is not transferable so I'd make sure that your source is reliable before buying anything used. (Cartridges are a good example.)

CONCLUSIONS

This CDD is a nice addition to your computer if you are looking to add removable expandability. It is faster than both Commodore drives, fits in a standard 3.5" drive bay, and has a low \$/MB ratio.

I give the drive a 5 out of 5 stars and recommend it to anyone looking for a magnetic CDD. ✓



Antigravity

harnessing one of the most powerful forces in the universe
from the internet — author unknown

If you drop a buttered piece of bread, it will fall on the floor butter-side down. If a cat is dropped from a window or other high and towering place, it will land on its feet. But what if you attach a buttered piece of bread, butter-side up, to a cat's back and toss them both out the window? Will the cat land on its feet? Or will the butter splat on the ground?

Even if you are too lazy to do the experiment yourself you should be able to deduce the obvious result. The laws of butterology demand that the butter must hit the ground, and the equally strict laws of feline aerodynamics demand that the cat can not smash its furry back. If the combined construct were to land, nature would have no way to resolve this paradox. Therefore it simply does not fall. That's right, you clever mortal (well, as clever as a mortal can get), you have discovered the secret of antigravity!

A buttered cat will, when released, quickly move to a height where the forces of cat-twisting and butter repulsion are in equilibrium. This equilibrium point can be modified by scraping off some of the butter, providing lift, or removing some of the cat's limbs, allowing descent.

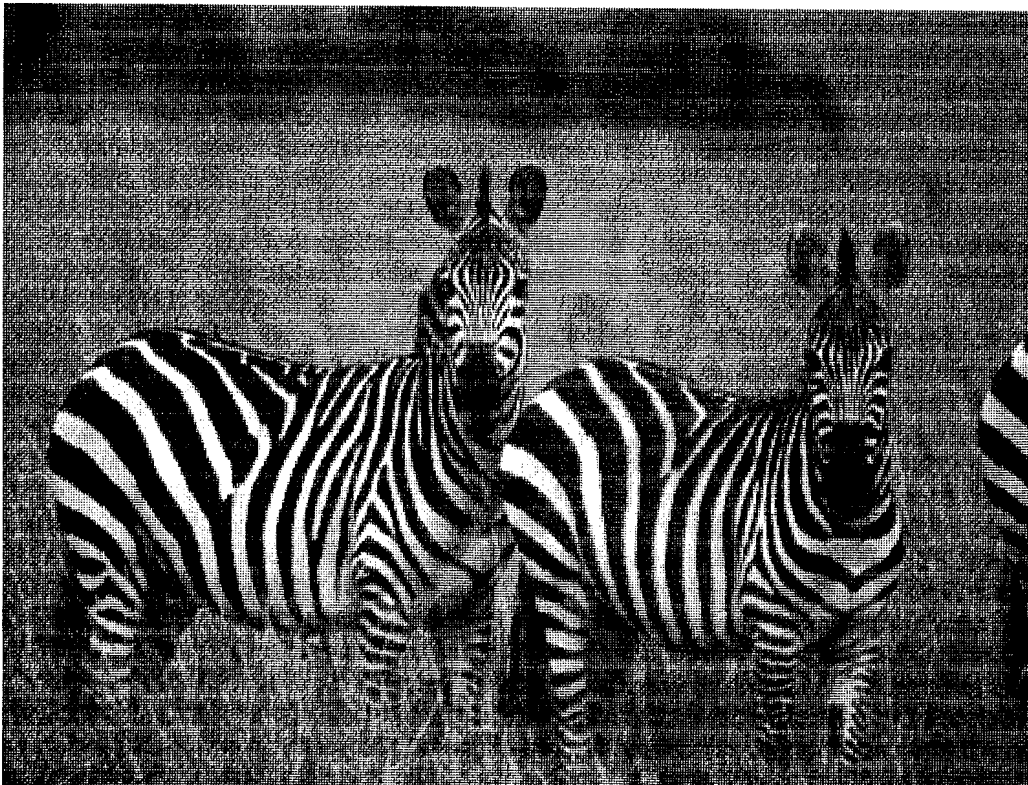
Most of the civilized species of the Universe already use this principle to drive their ships while within a planetary system. The loud humming heard by most sighters of UFOs is, in fact, the purring of several hundred tabbies. The one obvious danger is, of course, if the cats manage to eat the bread off their backs they will instantly plummet. Of course the cats will land on their feet, but this usually doesn't do them much good, since right after they make their graceful landing several tons of red-hot starship and [angry] aliens crash on top of them.

And now a few words on solving the problem of creating a ship using the aforementioned anti-gravity device. One could power a ship by means of cats held in suspended animation (say, about -190 degrees Celsius) with buttered bread strapped to their backs, thus avoiding the possibility of collisions due to tempermental felines. More importantly, how do you steer, once the cats are all held in stasis?

I offer a modest proposal: We all know that wearing a white shirt at an Italian restaurant is a guaranteed way to take a trip to the laudromat. Plaster the outside of your ship with white shirts. Place four nozzles

symmetrically around the ship, which is, of course, saucer shaped. Fire tomato sauce out in proportion to the directions you want to go. The ship, drawn by the shirts, will automatically follow the sauce. If you use t-shirts, you won't go as fast as you would by using, say, expensive dress shirts.

This does not work as well in deep gravity wells, since the tomato sauce (now falling down a black hole, perhaps) will drag the ship with it, despite the counter force of the anti-gravity cat/butter machine. Your only hope at that point is to jettison enormous quantities of Tide. This will create the well-known Gravitational Tidal Force. ✓



CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga North Dallas

Michael Turner

Hello, fellow Amiga Users! This month's meeting started promptly at 7:30. We started out with our usual News and Questions session. There appeared to be no news. There appeared to be not much in the way of juicy Amiga rumors either. Things appeared to be getting a bit quiet so Steve turned the speaker's podium over to Thomas Brooks to begin his presentation.

And what a presentation it was! For those of you who don't know, Tom is the SysOp of the BBS A.I. For the presentation, Tom was speaking about Fidonet. Actually, our speaker covered just about every subject and answered just about every question you would ever even want to know about computer communication, Fidonet, networks and BBSs.

Tom began with the history of Fidonet which started over twenty years ago. Using a drawing board and some fancy freehand drawing he demonstrated how the network has built up over the years and what is available on it. With Fidonet you can communicate with people all over the world and also pick up Amiga files, too! He demonstrated where his BBS is in the system and how the address system works on the Fidonet. There are about 36,000 nodes in the network at this time and, as points are not listed, there could easily be twice as many connections in total. All of this is world-wide! Tom also explained the process he went through to get two of his own "Echos" on the network worldwide.

Echomail, Netmail, Nodes,

Zones, Amiga Distribution System, Sub-Hubs...Tom covered the whole thing as we sat spellbound. Our presenter started with a simple circle in the middle of the drawing board and by the time he got through he had a drawing that looked like something out of an electrical engineering class. And we understood the whole thing! He even had handouts for us to keep the whole thing straight. By the end of the presentation I actually felt kinda smart. (For those who know me well, please no comments...) To top it all off, Tom went through the process of dialing a BBS to get on the Fidonet and showed how to maneuver your way around from there. After he answered a myriad of different questions the audience finally let Tom sit down and relax.

However, the evening was not over yet. Thomas Dykes had just received Workbench version 3.1 and

(Apparently, there has been sort of a problem in this area with Workbench 2.0 and 3.0.) As near as we could figure, this problem has been fixed, as Workbench 3.1 will let you choose between different ROM versions! (Of course, is any computer problem ever really, truly...fixed?) Thomas said that he has not had any problem running games with this version, however.

As 9:30 began to draw up on us it was time to leave before they kicked us out of the church. Many thanks should go to Thomas Brooks and Thomas Dykes (and, of course to Steve) for their fine presentations. Can't wait for next month! See you there!

Metro C64/128

Brenda Sessums

Our March meeting found 20 members sampling Terry Wright's straight-from-the-oven, luscious, chocolate macadamia cookies with white chocolate chips (drip, drip...drool).

Brenda Sessums had everyone put on ID Tags with their pets names, or grandchildren, spouses, or iguanas. No, really!

Phil "Buddy Bob" Heberer sold a Star printer to a lucky lady who came early and snatched it up. He also sold an Aprotex 2400 baud modem which

plugged directly into the computer without an interface. He has one modem left for sell, his Line-Link 14.4, since he has another one he now uses. The Line-Link requires a Swift-Link cartridge and cable (interface).

Phil gave a GEOS demo and trouble shooting session that Jack

Thought For The Month

*There must be more to life
than sitting wondering if
there is more to life...*

installed it in his Amiga and graciously brought his computer over to let everybody have a preview of it. Thomas demonstrated several new options and several differences that separated this new version from the older versions. A question arose as to whether this new version is compatible with older games.

CHAPTER NEWS

and a couple of other members asked for. He showed how to set up window colors, instead of just having the regular gray screen. All this time, I thought it was just gray! He also showed us how to put graphics in a GeoWrite document. The graphic gets centered on the page, regardless of how many columns you have in the document. This is just a feature of GeoWrite. You can place text above and below the graphic, but not beside it. If you want to place text beside a graphic, as in creating a custom mailing label, you have to go to GeoPaint. You can also scale your graphic in GeoPaint and print in color!

User's reports: Star Palace and Truckers Place listed in last month's newsletter are excellent and free, Amiga-based boards with Commodore 64/128 file areas. Destermin is excellent for using on the StarText BBS.

Is your monitor acting a little sick lately? More specifically, does it work fine for a while, then go blank? Well, that sounds like it might be a flyback problem. What, you don't have a vague idea what a flyback is? Well, that's OK. Phil revealed that he has a text file describing what the flyback is and how to solder it correctly. It seems that on certain monitors (like the 1902), the flyback transformers weren't soldered correctly. What may be required is to re-solder the flyback. No problem. Of course, you have to know how to use a solder gun, and the Metro C-64/128 Users group accepts no responsibility for a botched soldering job!

Here's another monitor problem: ghosted letters or images on the screen, even when blank. This was probably caused by leaving the monitor on a particular screen display for a long time which allowed the image to "burn in" on the monitor. Two preventive measures are to use a screen saver like on the Easy Loader menu, or

simply turn the monitor off if you want to leave your computer on, but you plan on being away from your computer for more than a few minutes.

We had some fabulous door prizes donated by Commodore Country this month. And the winners were:

- Flight Simulator II — Ted
- Wasteland — Jo Lynn Linville
- Echelon with the Lipstick — Walker Brent (Brenda will get him for that one!)
- Who Framed Roger Rabbit — Sam Owens Jr.
- Mail Order Monsters — Brian
- Easy Script — Terry
- The Bard's Tale II (Amiga) — Jack Tarvin (he will trade for 64 stuff at CC)
- Strike Fleet, The Naval Task Force Simulator — Sam Owens

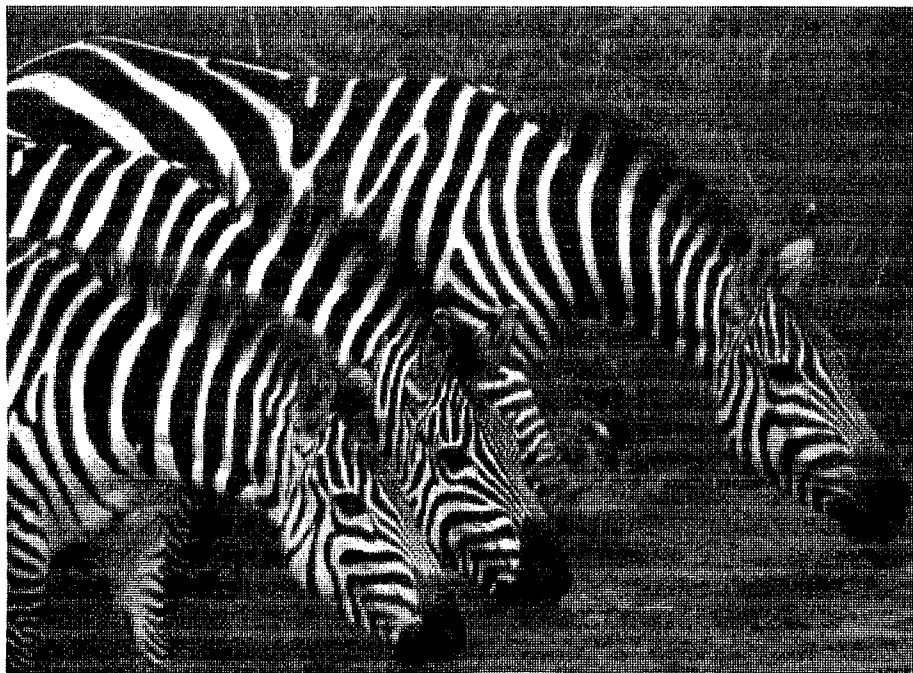
Then we had a drawing for even MORE fabulous prizes donated by our newest member, Kathy Cole. The winners in the second drawing were:

- Blue Angles — Brian

- Gunship — Roger Kromer
- Desk Manager — Bertha Owens
- Database program — Bill Worthington

We missed a few of the prizes awarded, so if you won and didn't get listed, sorry, but that was a lot of prizes.

Next month, Phil and Mike will give an Internet demo. You know, that information superhighway" Gore, and practically everyone else, has been talking about! (Even Popular Mechanics has an issue out about Internet!) They plan on having "Super Disks" containing Novaterm and Destermin with phone number already set up. There will be other helpful programs for getting on local BBSs and the Internet, such as off-line mail readers, and the Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet. These disks will be available for \$1 per disk, or bring your own blank disks to get it for free! Phil says there may be about 4 disks, maybe more. Our modem pros will give an off-line demo and possibly show a video of a live Internet session. Don't miss out!



The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$24 per year or \$15 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — \$36 (\$96); Half Page — \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page — \$12 (\$32); Business Card — \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!*, *ProWrite*, *WordPerfect* or *Final Writer* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

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Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

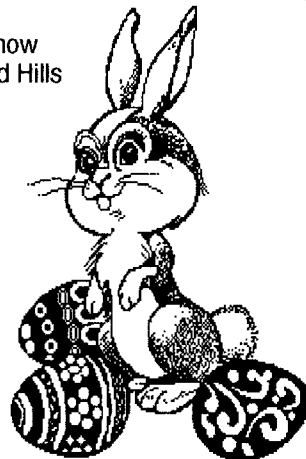
April 4 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

April 8 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — UNT Health Sciences Building
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

April 11 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

April 18 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

May 2 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820
at Rufe Snow
N.Richland Hills



May Newsletter Deadline — 7am, April 22

**These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members
Be sure to show your membership card**

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